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AMENDED CLAIMS

I claim:

1. (Original) A System for searching, finding and contacting dates on the Internet in instant messaging networks, comprised of at least the following elements:
 - a. A Client program, located on the User's computer;
 - b. At least one Server, located on the Internet;
 - c. At least one module for filling and/or making changes to a computer dating compatibility questionnaire;
 - d. A search module for finding potential dates which can check also if they are currently Online;
 - e. At least one of: An ability to search also for dates who are not currently Online, and The ability to search for dates based on reciprocal compatibility;
 - f. An instant messaging element which knows if the user is currently On-line, and also enables instant exchange of messages between users.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said system is part of a custom-made instant messaging client, or at least part of the system is an add-on or plug-in, which can be coupled to at least one of the client programs of existing instant messaging networks.
3. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the filled questionnaire data is saved on at least one of:
 - a. Locally on the user's computer,

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- b. A dynamic database which contains users' data only as long as they are Online.
 - c. A dynamic database which contains users' data only as long as they are Online, but at least the user's unique ID is saved also in a static DB on the server.
 - d. A static database on a server on the Internet, and each user's record is marked as Online as long as the user is Online.
 - e. A static database on a server on the Internet, and each user's record is marked as Online as long as the user is Online, and the user can search also for persons not currently Online and add them to his contactee list.
 - f. The user can be notified immediately at least for some contactees when they become Online.
4. (Canceled).
5. (Canceled).
6. (Canceled).
7. (Currently amended) An Online computer dating system wherein the system is capable of indicating to the user matching dates that are currently online differently from matching dates that are not currently online, and the system knows if users are currently online by at least one of:
- a. An integration with an Instant Messaging system, as in claim 2.
 - b. For users that gave also an IM id number, the system tries to find out if they are currently Online, and if so, when showing a potential date's data on a dating search results list, the system shows also his/her IM id number, the IM network that it belongs

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- to, and an indication if he/she is Online, so that the user can contact him/her through the appropriate IM client program.
- c. For users that gave also an IM id number, the system tries to find out if they are currently Online through an element that contacts the relevant server.
- d. Being Online can be defined as at least one of: a₁. A user has logged into the system with his/her user name and password not longer than a certain time ago, b₂. A user has performed at least 1 activity in the system not longer than a certain time ago. c₃. The user continues to actively use the browser. d₄. A user's computer is connected to the Internet and the user ~~is~~has been active at the computer not longer than a certain time ago.
8. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein at least one of the following elements is added to the contactee list near each contactee: Sex, Age, Area, compatibility scores, Last Date and time of Activity, Most frequent activity hours and/or day parts and/or week days, How often the person is usually Online, Last Communication date with the user, Number of communications so far with the user, and Dating availability Status.
9. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the contactee list can be sorted by at least one of the elements listed in claim 8, and the sorting order is based on at least one of these elements.
10. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein at least one of the following features exists:
- a. The user can have at least one of the following additional abilities: Knowing how many other users have him/her in their contactee

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lists, Knowing at least the e-mails of these users, and being able to broadcast messages to them.

- b. Whenever a user changes his/her Dating availability Status it is automatically updated in all the contactee lists wherein that user is listed.
- c. Each user can also remove himself/herself automatically from all the contactee lists where he/she is listed and/or at least block certain users by at least one of being deleted from their contactee lists and making the system never let them know that the user is online.

11. (Currently amended) The system of claim 7 wherein at least one of the following features exist:

- a. The user can choose in each search at least one of the following search options: a. Reciprocal compatibility Search based on the self descriptions and preferences and importances in the questionnaires of both the user and the potential dates; b. 1-way compatibility search based at least on the data of preferences and importances of the user's questionnaire; and c. Attribute search, based on marking for the search a small number of attributes that are used as necessary conditions or marked with importances and using at least these preferences.
- b. At least in one of the non-reciprocal search options, the user's own self description data is also taken into account at least partially.
- c. The user can ~~request and~~ get a list of date-search results that show the most compatible potential dates in descending order of compatibility, and near each potential date is marked if he/she is currently Online, and, if he/she is not online, at least one of: When

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was the last time and date he/she was Online, When he/she is most frequently Online, and How often he/she is usually online.

d. The user can get a list of date-search results that show the most compatible potential dates in descending order of compatibility, and near each potential date is marked if he/she is currently Online.

e. The user can get a list of date-search results wherein near each potential date is marked if he/she is currently Online, and, if he/she is not online, at least one of: When was the last time and date he/she was Online, When he/she is most frequently Online, and How often he/she is usually online.

f. The user can get a list of date-search results that show the most compatible potential dates, and near each potential date is marked if he/she is currently Online.

d.g. In a list of dates with descending order of compatibility, potential dates that are currently Online are marked by at least one of the group: {Special color, Special shape of text, Special size of text, and Special icon}.

h. In a list of compatible dates, potential dates that are currently Online are marked by at least one of: Special color, Special shape of text, Special size of text, and Special icon.

e.i. In a list of date search results, Ppotential dates that are not currently online but were recently Online are marked less conspicuously, and potential dates that are not currently Online and also were not recently online are marked even less conspicuously.

f.j. The user can request and get a list of date-search results that is divided at least into the following sub-lists and within each sub-list the dates are ordered by descending compatibility scores: A sub-list of currently Online dates, a sub-list of dates that are not

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currently Online but were recently Online, and a sub-list of dates that are not currently Online and also were not recently Online.

k. The user can get a list of date-search results that is divided at least into the following sub-lists and within each sub-list the dates are ordered by descending compatibility scores: A sub-list of currently Online dates, a sub-list of dates that are not currently Online but were recently Online, and a sub-list of dates that are not currently Online and also were not recently Online.

l. The user can get a list of date-search results that is divided at least into the following sub-lists: A sub-list of currently Online dates, and a sub-list of dates that are not currently Online.

m. The user can get a list of date-search results that is divided at least into the following sub-lists and within each sub-list the dates are ordered by descending compatibility scores: A sub-list of currently Online dates, and a sub-list of dates that are not currently Online.

k.n. If the potential date is not currently Online, the last time and date he/she was online is listed near his/her details.

l.o. If the user is accessing the server from a Client program on another computer, he/she can still access at least his/her questionnaire data and contactee list from a copy kept on the server, by supplying appropriate password/identification.

m.p. The user can send instant messages to potential dates who are currently Online and/or enter chat with them.

n.q. If a user's compatibility scores are generally low beyond a certain criterion, the system can report to the user the list of questions that most contributed to the problem.

o.r. Each two users of the system can also check the exact compatibility between them.

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12.(Canceled).

13.(Canceled).

14.(Canceled).

15.(Canceled).

16.(Canceled).

17.(Currently amended) The system of claim 7 wherein a systematic data pool of pictures of males and of females is used, and the pictures are at least one of photographs and systematically drawn images, and so that each user can at least one of: {mark at least 1 picture that is most similar to himself/herself, and mark the pictures of the opposite sex that he/she most likes}, ~~and the pictures are at least one of: photographs and systematically drawn images.~~

18.(Currently amended) The system of claim 17 wherein at least one of the following features exist:

- a. The pictures are divided at least into facial pictures and body pictures and/or more modular choices and/or combinations are available. ~~and are marked separately for each category.~~
- b. At least one of the info from marking the pictures and info from textual questions on appearance is taken into account while calculating the appearance compatibility.
- c. The info from the textual questions on appearance is taken into account while asking the user to mark his/her own appearance and the appearance of the desired dates, in order to increase efficiency and save time.
- d. The user is asked to make choices in a tree-like manner in order to increase efficiency and save time.

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19.(Canceled).

20.(Canceled).

21.(Original) In an Online dating system, a method wherein users can be notified automatically when someone new fitting a certain criterion has at least one of: Sent his/her data to the system, Sent his/her data to the system and is currently Online, and Performed a compatibility search for the first time.

22.(Currently amended) The ~~system~~method of claim 21 wherein the notification is by at least one of: Sending an appropriate e-mail message to the user, Sending an appropriate instant message to the user, Adding the new dates directly into the user's contactee list, Automatic phone call to the user, and Sending an SMS message to the user.

23.(Canceled).

24.(Canceled).

25.(Canceled).

26.(Canceled).

27.(Canceled).

28.(Canceled).

29.(Canceled).

30.(Canceled).

31.(Canceled).

32.(Canceled).

33.(Canceled).

34.(Canceled).

35.(Canceled).

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- 36.(Canceled).
- 37.(Canceled).
- 38.(Canceled).
- 39.(Canceled).
- 40.(Canceled).
- 41.(Canceled).
- 42.(Canceled).
- 43.(Canceled).
- 44.(Canceled).
- 45.(Canceled).

46. (Original) The system claim 7 wherein for determining if the user is still Online without having to send short message every certain interval, at least one of the following methods is used:
- a. The client software creates a hook or interface with the communication software and/or with the routines that are activated when the OS (Operating System) is shut down so that when the user closes the client software and/or the Internet connection and/or shuts down properly the OS, the client software can still first send to the IM server a message that the user has logout out, before letting the connection to actually be closed.
 - b. The IM server is automatically informed by other IM clients if they try to reach a client that is considered Online but don't succeed and thus the IM server can assume that that IM client is no longer Online.
 - c. If the IM server does not succeed in communicating with a client, the server can assume that the client is no longer Online.

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- d. If the server and/or other clients receive communications from a client that was considered to be offline, the receiving clients report it to the server and the server updates its status to Online.
- 47.(Original) The system of claim 7 wherein when dealing with people not currently Online the system automatically tries to come up with a list of most compatible dates who are most recent, and if the scores are not high enough and/or the list is not long enough, the system automatically decides to create instead a list containing also people who are less recent and so on in one or more steps, until the list is long enough and/or the scores are high enough and/or the recency compromise has reached backwards enough.
- 48.(Original) The system of claim 7 wherein if the user did not answer some questions, the system handles the missing values by at least one of:
- a. Taking into account the average or most frequent answers in each question that the user did not answer.
 - b. Taking into account also the correlations of each missing answer with other answers
 - c. Giving a lower score for matching on missing values, in a way that reflects the uncertainty.
- 49.(Original) The system of claim 17 wherein when there is no direct match between the marked self image of the date and the user's marked preferences in these images, or vice versa, the system takes into account also the distance or similarity between the preferred images and the actual image, and at least one of the following features exists:
- a. Said distance or similarity analysis is based on systematic classification of the images according to various variables.

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- b. Said actual image is the image or images that were marked by the other person as most similar to himself/herself.
- c. The relevant parameters of each image are coded in advance as numeric data so that no actual image analysis is done during the compatibility search.
- d. If the date submitted also an actual photo then the analysis of distance or similarity can be done in addition or instead also on the actual photo.

50.(Original) The system of claim 7 wherein if the user browses through photos of actual opposite sex users, he/she can request to view photos that are similar to one or more photos that he likes and then the system automatically shows him those photos, and/or this is used as one of the criteria for the automatic matching.

51.(Original) The system of claim 50 wherein the photos of actual users are automatically analyzed in advance after the user submits it according to various parameters in order to convert it into numerical codes, so that during the actual compatibility search and/or during searching for similar photos only these numerical codes are used.

52.(Original) The system of claim 17 wherein at least one of the following features exists:

- a. The user can request to browse photos of actual users that are similar to any of the systematic photos that the user marked as desirable.
- b. If a user submits an actual photo this photo can be automatically analyzed in order to correct the estimate that the user gave about how similar he is to photos of the systematic pool of images

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53.(Original) The system of claim 7 wherein the mark that indicates if someone is currently online and/or the availability status of each date is automatically updated also on the list of compatible dates at least if the user saves the list or keeps the window of the list open, like in the automatic updating of the contactee list.

54.(Original) The system of claim 7 wherein dynamic web pages are used and for updating the online status of dates on the results list and/or for faster instant messaging through the browser at least one of the following features is used:

- a. The refresh command is initiated automatically by the site when there is any change in the page, so that the browser can get a refresh even if it didn't ask for it.
- b. The browser asks for refresh more often, but if nothing has changed then the browser gets just a code that tells it to keep the current page or window as is.
- c. When the refresh is sent, it is a smart refresh, which tells the browser only what to change on the page instead of having to send the entire page again.

55.(Currently amended) The ~~system-method~~ of claim ~~42~~1 wherein instead of sending the notification as soon as possible after the new date becomes available, the system waits until one or more such highly compatible dates become available and if they do then the message is sent immediately, otherwise the system waits a certain time limit, and if no additional highly compatible dates that meet the criteria become available, then the message is sent anyway.